

## Verse From the Sea, the Road, the Farm

By CONSTANCE MURRAY GREENE

IT is ironic that *A Book of the Sea* should fall into the hands of a reviewer to whom Rupert Brooke's "Channel" verses are the truest interpretation of the sea. An Englishman, reviewing this anthology of Lady Sybil Scott's, ventures the belief that an Englishman sings from the sea and others from the shore, but he probably hadn't Rupert Brooke in mind when he said this and meant something quite different. Having Shelley, Swinburne, Byron and Matthew Arnold to fall back upon and Conrad and Masefield right in hand makes it easy for an Englishman to cast these aspersions, and we don't mind—in fact we much prefer singing from the shore.

It was on the shores of Italy that Lady Scott conceived *A Book of the Sea*, and this, she points out in her editor's note, accounts for the general trend of her selections toward "the legends of Greece rather than those of the North, to passages descriptive rather of the influence of the wonder and beauty of the sea on the mind of the poet than of the struggles of the sailor with the wind and waves. In such surroundings Odysseus seemed a more fitting companion than 'Henry Martin,' Shelley and Matthew Arnold more sympathetic singers than the eighteenth century authors of ballads and chaunties." So, on approaching her anthology one should be heartened by the knowledge that it is to have less of the Nancy Lee type of sea song and the groaning of the harbor bar, and more of the "light and sound and darkness of the sea" which Swinburne felt.

Nine of the ten people who feel an instinctive scepticism toward such a volume in the abstract will recognize immediately the value of this particular work, in which distinctive taste and a good deal of personal courage have united with an almost uncanny knowledge of sea literature from the earliest ages. Among the selections from Masefield is *Sea-Fever*, that haunting melody as insistent as the sea's call to him:

"I must go down to the seas again to the vagrant gypsy life,  
To the gull's way and the whale's way  
where the wind's like a whetted knife;  
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a  
fellow-rover,  
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when  
the long trick's over."

We admire the courage which is shown in including long passages from Virgil, the *Odyssey*, Euripides and poems in French, Spanish and Italian, including Dante in the original. Of the modern poets, De La Mare, Robert Nichols, Masefield and a few others are represented. We wish there had been more, but the wonder is that one feels so few regrets where there might have been so many, and that so tremendous an undertaking should have been executed with such general success.

A poet is safe in singing of children, animals and fairies in spite of what the critics may say. It has become the fashion, and a monstrous unpleasant one in our opinion, to adopt a jeering attitude toward a poet who has remained simple and human through these denormalizing years. R. C. Lehmann, whose little book, *The Vagabond; and Other Poems From "Punch,"* is among John Lane's new offerings in London and New York, is by no means a novice. He has been on the staff of *Punch* for nearly thirty years and is the author of more books than we can mention, including *Conversational Hints for Young Shooters*. His verse is pleasant and full of poetic fancies with no pretence at being anything that it isn't. To him the bathing of the Pekinese is a subject for gay and amusing rhyme and he is



at his best when he hails *The Death of Euclid*:

"A threnody for Euclid! This is he  
Who with his learning made our youth  
a waste,  
Holding our souls in fee;"  
and in the lines on the war which he has called *Teeth Setting*, among them,  
"When a rowdy rampant Kaiser, stout  
and mad and middle-aged,  
Strips his breast of British Orders just  
to prove that he's enraged!"

not so pleasant as it might be, perhaps, but pleasanter than most things that are written of the Kaiser, and it proves that Mr. Lehmann can be amusing about anything.

Walter Prichard Eaton was once a newspaper man, critic, author and all sorts of things, and now he says that he has become a farmer. *Echoes and Realities* cannot be taken as representative farm labor, however, as much of the verse was written a long time ago, before nature spirited him away from us. Perhaps the best things in his book are

*Bridgeport, Feb. 3, 1917, and To the German People*—with its striking last lines:  
"Not scorn for men who are afraid to die,  
For you have met the hail of battle strife,  
But scorn for those who let their fate go  
by,  
Red scorn for men who are afraid of  
life!"

He includes a number of little boy verses and some nature poems which show an intimate acquaintance with it which has probably been responsible for making him a farmer. Mr. Eaton is a versatile man in a number of directions and he shows his poetic agility in the wide range of subjects which he has chosen to sing about. The dedication is to Capt. Franklin P. Adams.

A BOOK OF THE SEA. Selected and arranged by LADY SYBIL SCOTT. Oxford University Press. \$3.

THE VAGABOND; AND OTHER POEMS FROM "PUNCH." By R. C. LEHMANN. John Lane Company.

ECHOES AND REALITIES. By WALTER PRICHARD EATON. George H. Doran Company. \$1.50.

## "A Little Boy Lost"

By GEORGE GORDON.

AS the author of *Green Mansions* Mr. W. H. Hudson stands high in my literary affections. He has a sense of the fitness of words; there is charm to his most casual expression; there is a turn to his phrase that appears at once inevitable and inimitable—and he loves little children. When he takes to writing fairy tales (I said) he will outdo them all; he will frighten us, fascinate us, delight us with impossible realities; he will make childhood a most wonderful adventure through inexplicable worlds of dream.

Then Mr. Knopf published *A Little Boy Lost*.

I am frankly disappointed. The book is lackadaisical, ineffectual, stupid. Why is it really fine writers are so often ineffectual?

There is no purpose to Barrie—but why? Surely no existence so drab and uninteresting as that of Peter Pan was ever imagined! Who would remain forever fourteen? Who would refuse the gift of middle age? the assurance, the power that comes with the prime of thirty-six?

This Martin of Mr. Hudson's is a dreaming, lonely child—in real life he would be a most infernal nuisance, the mockery of his fellows, the shame of his parents. Nevertheless Mr. Hudson would have us admire and rejoice in him as he wanders, lonely as a cloud, about the hills and dunes that neighbor his father's cabin. I have always pitied such children; it is the boy who whips his weight and more in other boys who makes life vivid, worth the fighting, a challenge to the will; it is the boy who stands alone that falls a prey to every whim, a melancholy madness driving him to misanthropy. Why canonize such boys? We are all of us too prone to spend our time musing and moping in the moonlight, basking in the sun upon a wide hill overlooking the sea. We must be roused from our day dreams, not lulled to further musing.

But I am especially angry with Mr. Hudson, a naturalist, for insisting that snakes will "sting." His snake "licks its little red, forked tongue" . . . "It's a merry the poisonous thing didn't sting you," says the father. Snakes feel with their tongues as a dog with his nose smelling or we with our hands, but they bite with their teeth—the poison sacs being above the fangs.

A LITTLE BOY LOST. By W. H. HUDSON. Alfred A. Knopf. \$1.50.

## Homer for Children; New Verse for Old

THERE are various ways of being instructed, some very pleasant you will conclude on seeing *The Children's Homer*, by Padraic Colum, and Ethel M. Colson's *How to Read Poetry*. Although the first is intended for children and the second for grownups, there is nothing to prevent their being changed about to good effect. Mr. Colum's book is the first single volume to contain the stories of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*. He has done it artfully, in a style both poetic and vigorous, with frequent Colum mannerisms to add piquancy and has shown throughout the scholarly touch that one would expect. Willy Pogany "presents" the edition with exquisite illustrations in color and line drawings in black and white.

*How to Read Poetry* is as simple and unaffected a treatment of a rather difficult subject as you could well expect. Miss Colson has divided her treatise on this much tortured sport into seven subheads, has interpolated eight admirable poems besides those which are included in the subdivisions, has given us a study of "old" and "new" poetry, and last of all a summary of the defence which we cannot do better than quote:

"Everybody should read poetry.  
"Why?  
"Because everybody loves it. (For further particulars see Chapter I).  
"Again why?  
"Because everybody loves, needs, desires, seeks enjoyment, and the reading of poetry, properly performed and pursued, makes for universal enjoyment of high, rich, rare, inexpensive, highly diversified, never ending and ever vernal order. (For further particulars see Chapter II.)"

Miss Colson can't be said to bear any resemblance to Hoover in the matter of economy. If there were any such thing as an authority on word conservation, her book would never have slipped past.

THE CHILDREN'S HOMER. By PADRAIC COLUM. The Macmillan Company. \$2.  
HOW TO READ POETRY. By ETHEL M. COLSON. A. C. McClurg & Co. \$1.25.

Henri Martin-Barzan, a French poet best known for his *Hymne des Forces*, is in New York on a mission for his country.

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